

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2018

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you and your colleagues begin work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you provide the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) \$454 million in budget authority, commensurate with the agency's FY 2010 appropriation adjusted for inflation. AHRQ sits at the critical intersection where patient needs meet healthcare delivery. It is the only federal agency whose sole focus is to generate reliable research on how to deliver the highest quality care, at the greatest value, with the best outcomes.

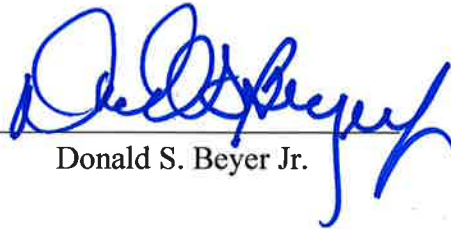
Discovering cures is critical to patients, providers, and our communities, but understanding how to most effectively deliver those cures to patients through health services research is equally critical. AHRQ-funded research allows us to understand where waste, inefficiencies, and gaps exist within the healthcare continuum. This knowledge helps patients, payers, providers, and others to harness American innovation and make the healthcare system safer, more efficient, and more effective. The investment that this committee makes in AHRQ reaps millions of dollars in savings each year, keeping Americans healthier, and helps to ensure that our healthcare system is innovative and responsive to patients' needs.

AHRQ also has a unique and critical role to play in the opioid epidemic, particularly in primary care practices. As part of this effort, researchers are working to define the best practices for managing pain and for the use of medication-assisted therapy for those struggling with addiction. Meanwhile, additional AHRQ research continues to make great strides in preventing health care acquired infections in ambulatory and nursing home settings and the agency's EvidenceNOW effort, currently being funded through the PCOR Trust Fund, is making strides in how we treat heart disease.

AHRQ funded at \$454 million will allow for investment in the agency's research portfolio to optimize care for America's nearly 60 million patients living with multiple chronic conditions. AHRQ is the only agency that funds research on the "real-world" patient—the one who doesn't have diabetes alone, for example, but also has cardiovascular disease and renal disease. By 2020, an estimated eighty-one million people will have multiple chronic conditions and the costs of their care will consume 80 percent of publicly funded health insurance programs such as Medicare and Medicaid. Investing in AHRQ now may help defray those costs.

Health services research shows that as much as one-third of the more than \$3 trillion our nation spends on health care each year is waste—care that is inappropriate, ineffective, or harmful. This critical work requires a dedicated, independent entity devoted solely to health services research that focuses on finding ways to improve the safety and quality of the health care Americans receive. Every dollar we invest in generating evidence to eliminate that waste is a sound fiscal investment. Just as we fund national war colleges to ensure that our military is the most effective fighting force in the world, funding AHRQ ensures that our health care system becomes the most efficient one in the world. We urge you to make AHRQ, and its critical research, a priority in FY 2019.

Sincerely,



Donald S. Beyer Jr.



David N. Cicilline



Danny K. Davis



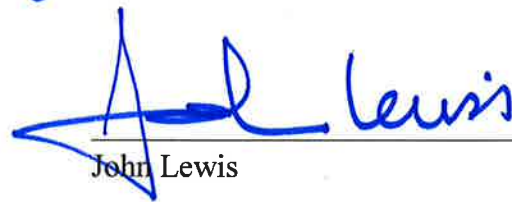
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